Canada - If Germany Should Win

An address delivered before
The Women's Canadian Historical Society
of Ottawa
On October 9th, 1914

BY
CLARANCE M. WARNER
PRESIDENT OF THE ONTARIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

For Private Circulation

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Before the Treaty of Paris in 1763 there was a lively discussion, "a paper war," which began in 1760 and which was carried on in the home land, and in America, as to whether Canada or the Island of Guadeloupe should be kept by England when peace was made with France, providing a choice was necessary. By that treaty Canada was retained and since that time it has been a British Colony.

From 1763 until 1841 the settled portions of Canada were governed as a Colony, having a more or less unsatisfactory parliament of the people from about the year 1791. In 1841 responsible government was introduced. In 1867, by the British North America Act, the Confederation of the Provinces was brought about and Canada became a self-governing country. The last of the British regular troops, except a few for the purpose of instruction, were withdrawn from Canada in 1870. It is true we are a part of the British Empire, one of Britain's colonies, but one which Britain has seen fit to trust to govern herself, and up to the present time we have given no occasion for alarm by the manner in which we have done the work. We are to-day proud of the fact that we are a British Colony, proud that we can help the motherland in her European struggles and we believe that she is proud of us.

What would be our position should Germany win in the present war and Canada become a German Colony? This is a question which it is difficult to answer. In considering it we shall have to remember that at the present time Germany has no so-called self-governing colonies, that Germany until very recent years has done no colonization work and that she has used her colonies as a place to settle German emigrants and has kept them under direct military, civil and economic control from Berlin.

The year 1884 is an important one in the history of German colonization. During the years just previous, Bismark and William I. did not deem it advisable to assume the responsibility of administration, and the older form of British colonization, by means of chartered companies, was the one used by Germany in her meagre attempts at this kind of work. The only responsibility of the Imperial Government was a guarantee of protection from foreign aggression. These territories were officially known as Protectorates and were not actually incorporated into the Empire.

In the year above mentioned Germany began to acquire possessions under a colonial policy and since that time she has added to her Empire every foot of land she could. The chartered companies system did not prove satisfactory and she began to purchase the rights of these companies, until in 1889, she completed the work, and since that date all have been under the direct administration of the Empire. Her Colonial office was established in 1907, only seven years ago.

One point in connection with this subject of which we must not lose sight is the fact that Germany's great desire for colonial expansion is to provide a place to locate her surplus population and to secure a market for her surplus manufacturers. Her industrial development during recent years has been enormous and the increase in her exports of manu-

factured goods has been one of the marvels of modern Germany. She has not been fortunate in her colonies up to the present time, not one of them being suitable for the German settler and emigrant, at least in large numbers, and the result is that other countries, like the United States, have been profiting by her misfortune.

Her present colonies have been rather expensive possessions, because she has had to make up the deficiency between revenue and expenditure, the chief item of the expenditure being for military outlay, and has as yet not secured a possession that really serves her purpose—a country which would best serve the nation's political, racial and commercial advantages. Canada would be the ideal country to fit all the requirements of the case.

Perhaps it would be well to look for a short time at the feeling Germany would have towards Canada when she took possession of the country. We have always prided ourselves upon being free and that freedom has been granted us, at no expense to ourselves, by the powers that rule in Britain. We are recognized throughout the world as British subjects who would do almost anything to help maintain the Empire. When the Boer war was being waged (a war in which Germany certainly did not side with England) we sent some of our best men—not because England asked for them, but because we wanted to help the mother country. In the present war we are aiding in every way within our power. We have sent one good-sized contingent of men and more are to follow, and are paying the entire expenses in connection with clothing, provisioning, paying and transporting them to the battlefields of Europe. In addition to this we are making patriotic gifts of oats, potatoes, cheese, flour, coal, clothing and money, gifts out of proportion to anything ever imagined even by our own people, and to maintain the British Empire we are ready to make sacrifices which will make all that has been done up to the present time seem but a drop in the bucket. Does anyone imagine that Germany would occupy our country and forget all these things, these evidences of affection for her most hated rival?

The first act of Germany in taking possession of the country would undoubtedly be to put a strong contingent of German soldiers in every place of importance from Halifax to Vancouver, with lesser detachments in the smaller places. Then she would start to make us German.

The British flag would be replaced by the Black Eagle. The royal arms now displayed in every county court room in Canada and the other evidences of British dominion would be destroyed. No longer would it be "His Majesty's Mail" or on official documents "George, the Fifth, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India."

Our Canadian Parliament would be done away with. There would be no House of Commons or Senate to pass our laws. Every departmental head would be dismissed and probably every office holder in Canada would, in time, be put upon the shelf or given a secondary position with the standing of a clerk.

In place of the splendid organization which has been built up by

years of experience, we would have substituted the form of government our new masters deemed best adapted to keep us in complete subjection. Germany would face a new situation in dealing with Canada and we can only surmise that she would apply to our country a combination of her present colonial and home systems. The laws of our land would certainly not be founded on the so-called "Common Law" and their administration not based on the British North American Act.

German colonies have at the head of the administration an imperial governor who is responsible to the Colonial Office in Berlin. He is assisted by a council consisting of the chiefs of the departments. Each chief or local district official has his staff and police force. In practically every case these head men are Germans and the language used in all official business is the German language. The German Colonial Office, like other imperial offices, is nominally a branch of the chancellery.

Should a form of representative government be given us we could rely upon it that it would be no more liberal than that of the German empire. In Germany there was a semblance of rule by the people until the fall of Bismark in 1890, but when that master statesman gave up the reins, the Kaiser, Emperor William II., took chief control of the offices of Government and himself directed the State. Then the prosecutions for lese-majeste became more common because political discussion was limited and it was difficult to avoid criticizing. In spite of the fact that the Reichstag is elected by manhood suffrage, there exists no real parliamentary system in Germany, and "owing to the economic, political, social and religious structure of the nation" there never can be. The final decision really lies with the Prussian land-lords and they uphold their monarch. who is necessarily the Emperor of Germany.

A Canadian parliament would be useful to aid in settling local problems but being subject to the will of the Emperor, the members would be in constant fear of enacting legislation which would bring severe penalties. Such a body would naturally become a mere figure-head.

The City of Ottawa would, in all probability, be kept as a nominal capital, principally because here is machinery with which an administration of the colony could be effected. The importance of the city would certainly be less than at the present time and the Germans might decide that headquarters nearer the home government would be better adapted to their needs. There are Canadian cities on the Atlantic sea-board with provincial capital buildings that would house all the departments required to run the colony. In that event Ottawa, now the social centre of the Dominion, would lose its prestige.

Certainly there would be no more distinguished Canadians honored as they have been by the King, and it is highly probable that the Kaiser would require those who have already been so rewarded to relinquish their titles. Everyone would be required to swear allegiance to the German Emperor.

The department of Militia, directed from Berlin and in the hands

of German officers, could do practically as it pleased with Canadians. Military service would certainly be compulsory , and, even should no more stringent regulations than those of Germany be required, they would seem unbearable. A vast army of regulars stationed throughout the Dominion, maintained at our expense, does not sound attractive, and it is hard to think of the rank and file made up of our Canadian boys, frequently under domineering and over-bearing German officers. The Prussian military system is the basis of the imperial system and under that code every male is liable for active service at seventeen and must commence to serve by the time he is twenty years old. He serves for seven years, of which two must be spent with the colors. During his reserve years he is twice called for training with his corps for a maximum of eight weeks. He then serves under various regulations until his thirty-ninth year, making the whole length of his service nineteen years. Then he joins a further reserve list until he is forty-five years of age. The only exceptions to the above fixed rule apply to those who are physically or mentally unfit for service, or those who have attained a certain standard of education which allows them to join a special class and serve one year. This last classification is attainable by only a few, because, in addition to the qualification of learning, they must be wealthy in order to pay the expenses of their division.

As one authority has expressed it "The new Empire was founded with the sword and the essential theory of its structure is that it must be defended."

Thus we would have Canada over-run with a military system which, when once fully organized on such an elaborate scale, would not fail to have a deteriorating influence upon our now free Canadian manhood.

Our trade and commerce would all be changed. In place of our fine steamers, flying the British flag, leaving our ports for England, we would have boats sailing for Hamburg, with the German flag. Regulations so stringent as to practically prohibit communication with England would be bound to be enacted.

Our railroads, those vast systems which have been our pride, would probably pass to government ownership and the powers that be would see to it that they produced every pfennig of revenue that was possible. Since 1881 all the railroads in Prussia have been owned by the State and of the German systems, with a total of 34,470 miles in 1906, only 2,579 miles were owned by private corporations.

The heavy trade which we now enjoy with our neighbors to the south, trade which in the last fiscal year was reported to be in excess of six hundred and twenty-six millions of dollars, would become disorganized, principally because all of the treaties and agreements which we now have with the United States would become inoperative and our new masters would make such arrangements for the settlement of the various questions as would best suit the imperial purpose.

In Germany the posts and telegraphs, with the exception of Wurttemberg and Bavaria, all belong to the imperial postal district

and are under direct control. Applying this system to Canada, we would have our telegraph and telephone lines owned by the State. Of course we would use German stamps for our letters and in all probability the rate to the United States and England would be increased to twenty pfennig.

The Canadian banking system has been the subject of more favorable discussion by other countries than probably any other institution we have founded. It would be hard to see that system done away with, though probably its main features would be left intact. But the Germans know a good revenue producer when they see it and a tax upon our banks should produce a lot of money for them. Our coinage would be changed, our children would have new tables to study and we would all have to figure in pfennigs, marks and krones. One hundred pfennigs equal one mark and one thousand pfennigs equal one krone, the krone or crown being the gold coin. All our money would appear with the face of the Emperor on it in place of that of our King.

Branches of the imperial bank would be established throughout the country, and our own banks would have to conform to the rules laid down by it. The right to issue currency might be given to our institutions but, if allowed that privilege, it would certainly be given, as it is to other banks in Germany, subject to withdrawal on a year's notice.

The question of the tariff would no longer be a political issue with us because there would be no politics and the Colonial office would regulate that important issue. Certainly a preferential tariff with Great Britain would not be allowed us. Germany would undoubtedly put a tariff on Canadian manufactured goods entering that country and require all of her manufactures to enter Canada duty free. The result would be most disastrous for our Canadian manufacturing industries. In fact it would put them out of business. On the one industry of match making, a government monoply in Germany, the result would be to close the Eddy plant immediately.

The land system is hard to figure out under new owners. All the vast areas now known as Crown lands might be opened for settlement but more likely they would be disposed of to landlords. Having a large part of the country under free-hold at the present time would tend to make the German Emperor adopt the feudal system for the lands at present unoccupied. The props of his throne at the present time are unquestionably the great landlords and he would wish to have that system inaugurated in Canada to impress his new subjects with his powers. Should any of lands be sold in small farms, the Crown deeds would certainly look strange in their new form,—Emperor William II, by the Grace of God, etc.

In educational matters our system, supplanted by a few new forms, would probably prevail, though of course the text books relating to history and government would be changed. No more English history in our primary schools, and Canadian history so changed by the censor that we would hardly recognize it. Political history would be taken

from the curriculum entirely. In Germany elementary education is free. The school age is from six to fourteen years and attendance is compulsory. One authority says that "obedience and discipline are the two moral lessons of the elementary schools, as indeed they are nearly sure to be when the teachers are government officials and part and parcel of the machinery erected, at any rate in Prussia, for carrying on the business of the State. as the most important sphere of human activity." In Germany separate schools are allowed where mixed confessions exist.

We might be allowed to publish our newspapers but their pages, devoid of all political discussion and criticism, without the prominence now given to news of the British Empire and substituted for that, German news, with every article written with the fear of hurting the feelings of some German official, ~~they~~ would lose their main charm. Germany has no great newspapers of international reputation like the London Times, the Paris Figaro and the New York Herald, and the principal reason for not having them is that the papers of Germany have very little political influence. The Kaiser, Government and ruling classes are unquestionably hostile to an independent and strong press.

All books we would be allowed to publish would probably come under a strict censor. Our libraries, both private and public, would be inspected and every volume, which did not have the approval of the Kaiser, confiscated.

The question of taxation would certainly be carefully attended to and if this rich field for revenue was not drained dry, it would be a miracle. We in Canada do not know what taxes are, but a tax on all the commercial privileges, on our merchants, banking and brokerage houses, insurance companies, manufacturing concerns, incomes, farming industries, to say nothing of stamp taxes on checks, legal forms, and, in fact, upon everything that could be taxed, would soon teach us how vicious such an institution can be. In addition to direct taxation in the German colonies, the home government enforces a system of compulsory labor for certain public works.

What would be our standing with the nations of the world ?

Our relations with England and her colonies at an end, our right to make treaties with the United States terminated, all the special privileges which we now enjoy, gone—a sorry spectacle, indeed. We would be at the mercy of the Kaiser with his almost absolute control. The annoyance of the soldiers and of the policemen would become part of our daily life. Persistent official interference would be the rule. We would be dragooned where we are now free.

A German once said in jest that the German heaven is a place where "everything is forbidden on pain of severe punishment." We would be looking for a place to live where the state is less all-important and where the individual counts a little.

And as a climax to this ruthless upheaval in our economic, social, personal and political condition we should probably be called upon to pay an immediate war indemnity of possibly one billion marks. And we would have to do it whether we liked it or not, and then sing as if

we really had our hearts in our song, the German national anthem, "The Watch on the Rhine."

All of these difficulties and troubles so suddenly thrust upon us, depend upon that little word "if,"—if Canada should become a German colony. But there are three great reasons why this will never happen.

First of all England and her Allies are not going to lose in the terrible war which is now being waged in Europe. They may have temporary reverses in that titanic struggle, but in the end Germany must be brought to her knees. The odds are too strong against her. France, Russia, Japan, Servia, Belgium, Portugal and Great Britain united are bound to crush her, and when she is once crushed, they will see to it that German militarism is a thing of the past. She may rise again to be a great commercial nation, but it will be under such restrictions that never again will a ruthless Emperor, backed by a pack of unprincipled war lords, be able to control and build up a military system to devastate Europe and cause the misery which they have spread over the countries which are the battlefields of to-day.

The second reason is because of a bit of unwritten United States law called the Monroe Doctrine. This code, suggested to President Monroe in 1823 by England through her secretary, George Canning, has stood and will always stand in the United States of America. When Monroe said, "the American Continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintained, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers," he meant it and the American people mean to stand by it forever. And if there were no Monroe Doctrine the United States would never allow anyone to touch Canada, even should we, by any misfortune, lose the protecting wing of England. There is a deep-rooted friendship between the two countries which can never be broken. We may have our petty misunderstandings and may not always agree on matters of international relation but these trifles would be forgotten should Canada be in danger. The people of the United States are showing their real feeling in the present war—a war in which their country is officially neutral—by the free expression of a powerful press almost unanimously favorable to the Allies. One editorial from the New York Sun of October First is a fair sample of their attitude. It reads as follows :—

"THE PERNICIOUS ACTIVITY OF CERTAIN GERMANS

The Sun has no desire to advise the German Government, but it feels constrained to admonish in a friendly way the representatives of that government here that any attempt to create discord between the United States and Great Britain will be resented. The Sun yesterday, in a Washington despatch, gave ample evidence of a pernicious activity on the part of 'a group of Germans in Shanghai.'

We feel that there are some Germans nearer Washington than Shanghai who can profit by this advice, for if they do not, the Sun, from a patriotic sense of duty, may deem it necessary to be more explicit."

This is certaily plain language from a neutral. In the United

States all of the men of standing, both statesmen and citizens, are our friends, and were they not our friends, does anyone for a minute imagine that that country wants to have a German colony along three thousand miles of her international border? Think of the fortifications she would have to build, and the standing army she would forever have to maintain. A nation that has shown her utter disregard for her word, one that considers a treaty of neutrality a mere scrap of waste paper, one that would treat an innocent country like Belgium in the barbarous manner in which Germany has treated her, burning and destroying her undefended cities, towns, and villages, and inflicting unheard of cruelties on her women and children, one that would destroy art and architecture to gratify a personal ambition and one which the whole civilized world has learned to distrust, would certainly not be a welcome substitute for Canada as a neighbor.

The third and last reason why Germany will never own Canada is because Canadians would not have her for a master. How would we prevent it? That is the important question. We have practically no fortified position, an army that is small in comparison with that of other countries. and we are a sober, industrious, peace-loving people, numbering about eight millions. But how long would we remain peaceable if our freedom were to be taken from us? Our people would rise as one man with an energy that would make the magnificent effort of Belgium appear small in comparison. Every man who could hold a gun would join the colors. English, French, Irish, Scotch, American, German, Italian, Norwegian, Swede, Hungarian, Japanese, Chinese, and all the other units of our people would rush to help. Some may ask why I include all these races, and particularly the Germans, in the calculation. I answer that they are the very ones that would not want to see the present order of things changed. They realize the contrast between freedom and being subject to bureaucratic organization. They have settled with us and are among our best and most loyal citizens and when the time came for them to fight, they would fight to the last drop of their blood. It would not be very long before an immense army would be raised and an army that, fighting for such principles, could not be resisted by any foreign organization thousands of miles from its base. There is still another force that would be added to our standard. Scattered over the whole of the United States is a vast army of Canadians who have joined hands with our friends over the border and who have been received with open arms as American citizens. Though they make good Americans and are loyal to their adopted country, they have a warm feeling for their motherland, and almost to a man would join her cause.

At first we might have a few reverses, but bear in mind that we would not have to meet a German army such as is fighting in Europe to-day. By the time the Kaiser had defeated the combination against which he is fighting, hundreds of thousands of the best of his army would be out of action, killed or wounded, and if he desired to maintain his new-found supremacy over Europe, he would have to keep at home most of his army with its sadly thinned ranks, He might be able to send over here, one

two or possibly three hundred thousand troops, but what would they amount to against an army of possibly a million Canadians fighting for their liberty ? It is true that the Germans would be trained veterans, but even trained veterans fighting in a strange land where everyone is antagonistic, would have a sorry time trying to conquer a country like Canada. A country which has reared men like Macdonald, Cartier, Brown, Tupper, Mowat. Tilley, Galt, Foster, Cartwright, Borden, Laurier, Strathcona and hosts of others, is not made up of weaklings to submit to any foreign invasion. When the time came to act, we, of the younger generation, with the blood of our grandfathers and grandmothers, those hardy pioneers who won a home and built a nation under the greatest difficulties, could be depended upon to produce scores of other leaders under whom all Canadians would fight and win.

" Ours is the prestige born of love,
The harmony of power from reign to reign ;
Gift of the Sovereignty that rules above,
Gift of the centuries growing young again ;
Sing we the majesty of British right,
Sing we our own within our empire's might!
The strains that glorify our King and Queen
Are but the symbols of the uplifting lay—
The harmony of life that's born of liberty."